

REMARKS

This amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action issued October 6, 2006.

I. Restriction Requirement

In response to the Restriction Requirement, requiring election between Group I, claims 1-11, and Group II, claims 12-19, Applicants affirm the election of Group I, claims 1-11, drawn to a search and navigation system, for further prosecution, without traverse. Claims 12-19 were withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner and have been cancelled, without prejudice to pursuing the claims in the future.

II. Information Disclosure Statement

Applicants are resubmitting herewith the IDS filed on 8/26/2004, wherein it was erroneously indicated that the IDS included 3 pages. The Office Action noted that only one page was received. The IDS has been corrected to reflect that it includes only one page and is enclosed herewith.

III. Claim Amendments

Claims 1, 2, 3, 5, and 11 have been amended. Three new claims 20-22 have been added. The new claims are analogous to Claim 1, as amended, in substantial part. No new matter has been added. The amendments are discussed further below.

IV. Claim Rejections—35 U.S.C. 112

The Office Action rejected claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. 112 as being indefinite for reciting “manipulating displayed content” because the meaning of “displayed content” was not clear. The claim has been amended to address the Examiner’s concern.

V. Claim Rejections—35 U.S.C. 101

The Office Action rejected the claims under 35 U.S.C. 101 on the basis that the claims were not directed to statutory subject matter. Claims 1-2 and 5 have been amended to specifically recite that the claimed system is a “computer-implemented” search and navigation system. In addition, the claimed system does produce a useful result in that it enables search and navigation of a collection of materials. Moreover, claims 1, 2 and 5 each contain limitations drawn to an interface. Claim 1, for example, includes an interface “for providing a plurality of transitions,” “for receiving the first query,” and “for providing a representation of a response to the first query,” in part. The interface accepts input and provides output. These limitations further highlight the utility of the claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the claimed system is statutory subject matter and respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

VI. Claims Rejections 35 U.S.C. 102—Yahoo! prior art

The Office Action rejected claims 1-11 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by Yahoo!. Applicants have amended the independent claims to more distinctly claim the search and navigation system. General support for the amendments can be found throughout the specification; to facilitate the Examiner’s understanding and review, Applicants have provided herein citations to the specification wherein more specific support for the amendments may be found. The system claimed herein provides a search and navigation capability and experience that is completely different from a Yahoo! type “conventional navigation system”. Claim 1 now recites:

1. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented search and navigation system for a set of materials comprising:

a plurality of attribute-value pairs associated with the materials, wherein each of a plurality of values has an association with at least one of a plurality of attributes characterizing the materials;

a plurality of navigation states, wherein each navigation state corresponds to a particular expression of attribute-value pairs and to a particular subset of the materials, wherein for each navigation state the particular subset of the materials corresponding to the navigation state consists of those materials that are each described by every attribute-value pair in the particular set of attribute-value pairs corresponding to that navigation state;

wherein within the plurality of navigation states, at least a first navigation state includes a first attribute-value pair having a first attribute in which the first attribute-value pair does not describe all the materials that the first attribute characterizes, and a second navigation state includes at least the first attribute-value pair and a second attribute-value pair having a second attribute, which is not the same as the first attribute, in which the second attribute-value pair does not describe all the materials that the second attribute characterizes;

a set of rules for manipulating content provided in response to a query, a first query corresponding to a third navigation state corresponding to a third particular expression of attribute-value pairs and a third particular subset of materials, at least a first rule being composed of a first trigger for activating the first rule if the third particular expression of attribute-value pairs satisfies the trigger, the trigger including a third attribute-value pair, and a first action for providing a first manipulated subset of materials that is different from the third particular subset of materials if the first rule is activated; and

an interface for providing a plurality of transitions, each transition providing a direct path between two of the navigation states, wherein each transition represents a change from the set of attribute-value pairs corresponding to an originating navigation state to the set of attribute-value pairs corresponding to a destination navigation state, wherein a series of one or more transitions provides a path between any two navigation states, for receiving the first query from a user, for providing a representation of a response to the first query, the response including the third particular subset of materials if the first rule is not activated and including the first manipulated set of materials if the first rule is activated, for modifying one or more rules from the set of rules, and for providing a representation of how modification of one or more rules affects the response to the first query.

Claim 1 now more distinctly claims the navigation structure. Claim 1 now recites: "a plurality of attribute-value pairs associated with the materials, wherein each of a plurality of values has an association with at least one of a plurality of attributes characterizing the materials."

Support for this limitation can be found throughout the specification and specifically, for example, on pages 29-32. Claim 1 also now recites: “a plurality of navigation states, wherein each navigation state corresponds to a particular expression of attribute-value pairs and to a particular subset of the materials, wherein for each navigation state the particular subset of the materials corresponding to the navigation state consists of those materials that are each described by every attribute-value pair in the particular set of attribute-value pairs corresponding to that navigation state.” Support for this limitation can be found throughout the specification and specifically, for example, on pages 35-39 and with reference to Figures 16 and 17. Moreover, claim 1 recites: “wherein within the plurality of navigation states, at least a first navigation state includes a first attribute-value pair having a first attribute in which the first attribute-value pair does not describe all the materials that the first attribute characterizes, and a second navigation state includes at least the first attribute-value pair and a second attribute-value pair having a second attribute, which is not the same as the first attribute, in which the second attribute-value pair does not describe all the materials that the second attribute characterizes.” Support for this limitation may be found throughout the specification and specifically, for example, on pp. 18-22 and 35-38. By way of example, Figure 4 shows a navigation state that includes a first attribute-value pair, *Regions: Portuguese Regions*, that does not describe all the materials that the attribute *Regions* characterizes because, for example, it does not describe the materials for which the value of the *Regions* attribute is *French Regions*, as in Figure 3. Figure 6 shows a second navigation state that includes a second attribute-value pair, *Regions: Central Portugal*, that refines the first attribute-value pair *Regions: Portuguese Regions*.

These limitations describe aspects of a search and navigation system that has features that are not present in Yahoo! As described in depth in the specification, the presently claimed

invention enables conjunctive selection of mutually incomparable attribute value pairs, as described in the specification at least on pages 18 and 35-36 and illustrated in Fig. 4. Consequently, a navigation state of the presently claimed invention such as the claimed second navigation state can include a “first attribute-value pair” having a first attribute in which the first attribute-value pair does not describe all the materials that the first attribute characterizes *and also*, “a second attribute-value pair” having a second attribute, which is not the same as the first attribute, in which the second attribute-value pair does not describe all the materials that the second attribute characterizes. As the Office Action noted, Yahoo! is a conventional type of navigation system. Yahoo! is a directory tree-based system. Yahoo! only permits navigation of a single “attribute” at one time; Yahoo! does not permit selection of a second attribute-value pair corresponding to a second attribute in conjunction with a first attribute-value pair corresponding to a first attribute. In order to navigate a second attribute in Yahoo!, a user must navigate the second attribute independently, effectively discarding the first attribute-value pair (and first attribute). In particular, Yahoo! does not and could not provide any navigation state comparable to the second navigation state that “includes at least the first attribute-value pair and a second attribute-value pair having a second attribute, which is not the same as the first attribute, in which the second attribute-value pair does not describe all the materials that the second attribute characterizes.” Accordingly, the presently claimed invention is not believed to be obvious in view of Yahoo!.

More particularly, the Office Action indicated that the limitation of “a set of rules” was met by Yahoo! including an “indication slot for set the rules that search the web or just this category.” Claim 1 now recites “a set of rules for manipulating content provided in response to a query, a first query corresponding to a third navigation state corresponding to a third particular expression of attribute-value pairs and a third particular subset of materials, at least a

first rule being composed of a first trigger for activating the first rule if the third particular expression of attribute-value pairs satisfies the first trigger, the first trigger including a third attribute-value pair, and a first action for providing a first manipulated subset of materials that is different from the third particular subset of materials if the first rule is activated.” Support for this limitation can be found, for example, on pages 39-43 (particularly describing rules in general and aspects of a trigger) and 43-44 (particularly describing aspects of an action).

Applicants note that while the first trigger is described as “including a third attribute-value pair”, the trigger could be satisfied in various ways depending on how the trigger is specified in a particular implementation. The limitation is not intended to require that the third attribute-value pair be necessary and also sufficient to satisfy the trigger, although it could be. For example, the first trigger could include a conjunctive combination including the third attribute-value pair or it could entail a negation of the third attribute-value pair, or it could entail descendants of a navigation state including the third attribute-value pair, etc.

The feature of Yahoo! identified as a “rule” does not satisfy the limitation. The ability to select between “Search the Web” or “Just this category” in Yahoo! is merely a query option. The “Search the Web” or “Just this category” option is activated by mere selection, and is not dependent on a navigation state corresponding to the query. It does not include a trigger for activating the first rule if a third navigation state and a third particular expression of attribute-value pairs identified as corresponding to a first query satisfies the first trigger, or a trigger including a third attribute-value pair. Nor does Yahoo! teach or suggest this type of trigger as presently claimed.

Yahoo! also does not include other features of the invention set forth in claim 1. Yahoo! does not include an interface as set forth in claim 1, such as for modifying one or more rules from the set of rules or for providing a representation of how modification of one or more rules

affects the response to the first query. Accordingly, claim 1 is believed to be allowable over Yahoo!

Independent claim 2 has been analogously amended and is also believed to be allowable over Yahoo! Claim 2 includes similar limitations to claim 1 regarding the features of navigation states. Also, claim 2 now recites: “a rules engine for defining and processing a set of rules for manipulating content for display generated from a current navigation state, first content for display being generated using the current navigation state if no rule is activated, wherein each rule is composed of a trigger for activating the rule if the trigger is satisfied, wherein the trigger is evaluated against the current navigation state, and an action for providing second content for display in place of first content for display if the rule is activated, wherein a first rule includes a first trigger that includes a third attribute-value pair, and a first action for providing a first manipulated subset of materials in place of the current particular subset of materials corresponding to the current navigation state if the rule is activated.” Applicants note that the reference to “a current navigation state” is a generic reference to any of the plurality of navigation states to which the rules engine can apply, any one of which can be at a given point the current navigation state, and is not intended to refer to a particular fixed navigation state. Independent claim 5 has been analogously amended, and claims 2 and 5 and all claims depending therefrom are also believed to be allowable over Yahoo! for similar reasons.

New claims 20-22 include similar limitations and are also believed to be allowable for similar reasons.

VII. Claim Rejections 35 U.S.C. 102—Ferrari et al. (US Pub. 2002/0051020)

Claims 1-11 are also rejected as anticipated by Ferrari et al. (U.S. Pub. 2002/0051020).

Paragraphs 0067 and 0077 and Fig. 22 of Ferrari do not teach or suggest “a set of rules” as presently set forth in claim 1, a rules engine as set forth in claim 2, a rules engine as set forth in claim 5, or any related limitations referring to “rules”. In Section 8 of the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that “a set of rules” were found to correspond to the disclosure in paragraphs [0067], [0077], and fig 22, providing Bestsellers, Love Stories, etc. in Ferrari. Figs. 18-19 are believed to have been intended. The headings Bestsellers and Love Stories appear to be captions for categories of movie titles included in the interface display. Nowhere are the headings Bestsellers and Love Stories described as “rules” or as having a function comparable to a “first rule” as claimed herein. Accordingly, claims 1-11 and 20-22 are believed to be allowable over Ferrari et al.

VIII. Claim rejection 35 U.S.C. 103 - Yahoo! in view of Bennett (2002/0097088)

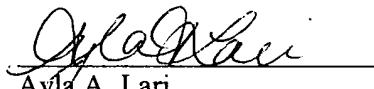
The Office Action rejected claim 11 over Yahoo! in further view of Bennett, referring to Bennet for disclosing “the displayed content and representation of one or more rules with the current navigation state are split.” Claim 11 is believed to be allowable over the combination of Yahoo! in view of Bennett because the combination is deficient for at least the reasons stated above with respect to Yahoo!

In view of the above Amendment, applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance.

A petition for a 2-month extension of time is enclosed herewith. No additional fees are believed to be due. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fee deficiencies and credit any overpayments to Deposit Acct. No. 08-0219

Respectfully submitted,

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